

# Pittsburgh Healthcare System

Heinz ★ Highland Drive ★ University Drive

## Working Together

Issue Fourteen

Fall 2003



 **CARES** Hearing  
August 27, 2003

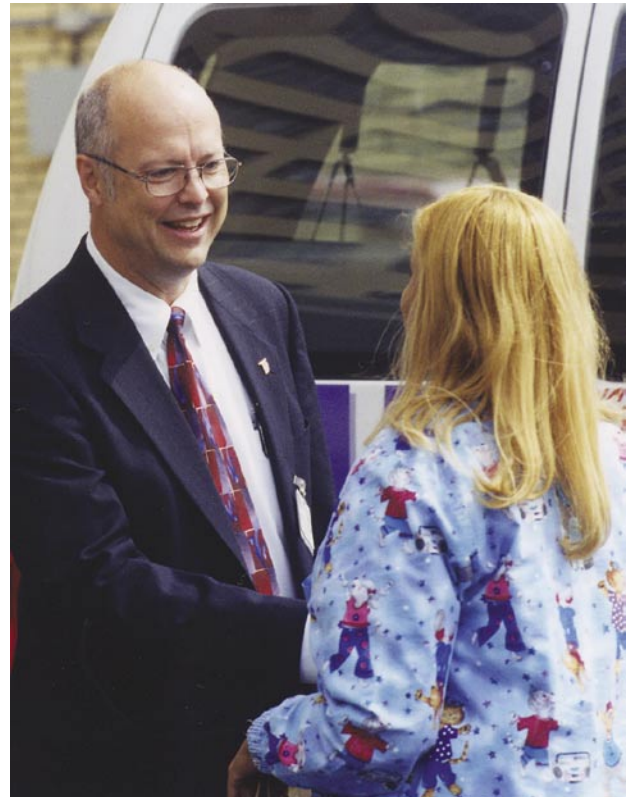




# A Message from the Director

## Dear Fellow Employees, Volunteers, Veterans and Friends of the VAPHS,

As we begin a new Fiscal Year, I would like to reflect on a few of the many accomplishments we have achieved over the past year. Most importantly, we have continued to provide the highest level of health care while we expanded services and clinical programs. We can be proud of our record in Fiscal Year 2003 of providing outstanding care to over 52,900 veterans, accomplishing over 430,500 outpatient visits, and maintaining our reputation as a National Referral Center that provides the highest quality, high tech care for veterans that can be found in the country.



Warren Park

The following are just a few highlights of the many accomplishments and goals we have achieved over the past few months:

- Added a Bariatric Surgery Program, increased GI Services, increased capacity in our Podiatry and Eye Clinic. There was also an expansion of the MHICM, HBPC, H/HHa and Opioid substitution programs
- Palliative care unit opened at Heinz Division
- 0 vets on wait list as of October 1, 2003 which is down from 3,500 a year ago
- Primary care teams and support staff added at Heinz to create a high performance team
- 8 East renovation complete, 8 West underway at University Drive Division
- Over 15,000 veterans enrolled in CBOC's in FY 2003
- Numerous enhancement projects underway and/or completed in past year include 1-3 East at Highland Drive, Renal unit, Hematology/Oncology clinic, and Hoptel at University Drive
- Advance Tray Delivery System implemented in August 2003 is a new process to provide a more efficient and better tasting food system
- Digital Radiography Rooms – 2 new imaging suites have been upgraded to assist in expanding the Radiology program.

This Fall issue of Working Together will present a feature on our Behavioral Health Programs, Performance Vital Signs, CARES Hearing, 2003 Cameos of Caring awards, Employee Appreciation Picnics and visit by Congressman Ted Strickland. It also spotlights the many outstanding achievements and awards that our staff has received in the past quarter.

Michael E. Moreland  
Director



*Michael E. Moreland*  
Director

*Rajiv Jain, MD*  
Chief of Staff

*Patricia Nealon*  
Acting Associate Director

*Ira Richmond*  
Associate Director for  
Patient Care Services

**The VA Pittsburgh  
Working Together**  
is published for the  
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patients and friends of the  
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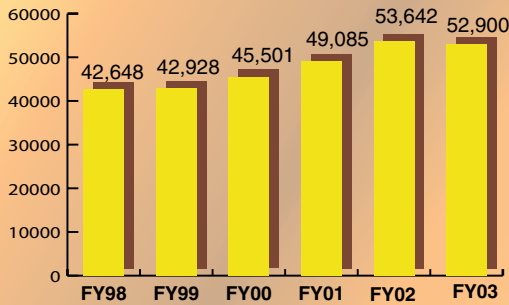
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*Glenn Hangard*

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*Warren Park*

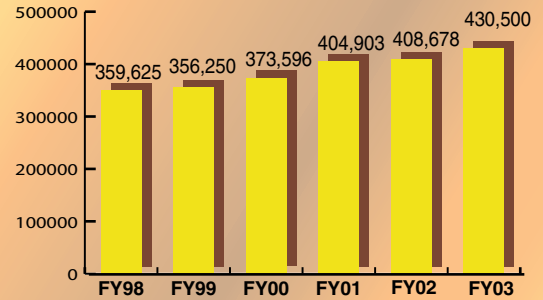
*CARES hearing at VAPHS  
on August 27, 2003.*

# Performance Vital Signs

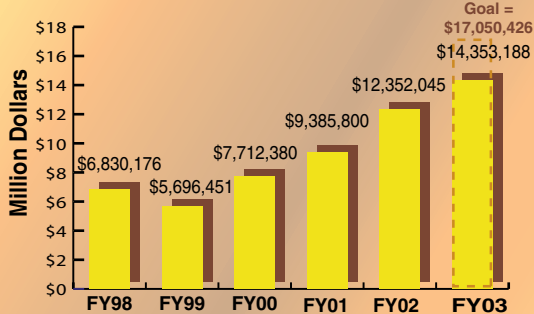
## Unique Patients



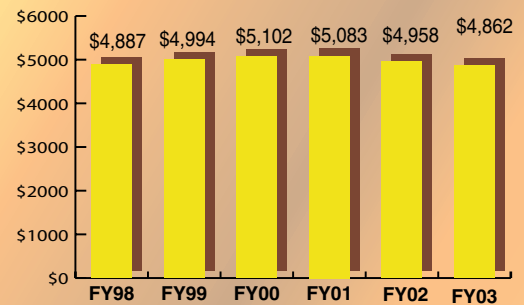
## Outpatient Visits



## Medical Care Cost Recovery



## Obligations/Unique Patient



## 2003 Cameos of Caring Awards Winners



**Peggy Connolly, RN**  
*University Drive Division, Same Day Surgery*

Peggy Connolly serves as a role model for staff and graduate nurses as a team player who is always willing to help wherever needed and takes care of patients from a holistic perspective.



**Vicki M. Suchar, RN, BSN**  
*Heinz Division, 2-South*

Vicki Suchar cares for patients and works to alleviate their concerns and complaints, while orienting new employees, continuing her education, and encouraging others to do the same.



Photos by Warren Park

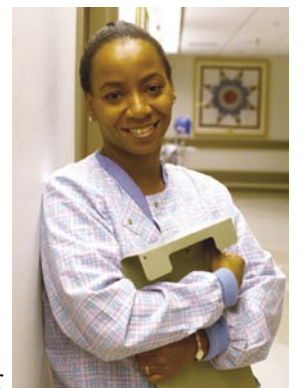
**Jane McClelland, RN, BSN**

*Highland Drive Division, Center for the Treatment of Addictive Disorders*  
Jane McClelland works with patients whose lives are complicated by drug and alcohol addictions as well as medical and psychiatric issues. She also serves as a CPR instructor.



**Mary Lou Bossio, RN, CRNP**,  
*University Drive Division, Pain Clinic*

Mary Lou Bossio works directly with hundreds of inpatients and outpatients to help them manage chronic pain. She was our nominee in the CRNP category.



**Antoinette Polite, RN**,  
*University Drive Division, 4-West*

Antoinette Polite is one of five registered nurses in the Pittsburgh area chosen by the Pitt School of Nursing to receive the first ever Cameos of Caring Endowment Scholarship!





# Behavioral Health Services at the VAPHS Program

The VAPHS provides veterans with a wide range of both inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services. The Joint Commission for Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) has given the VAPHS a score of 99 out of 100 in Behavioral Health which exemplifies the outstanding care that is provided.

The Behavioral Health Service Line is divided into Behavioral Health Care Teams, each addressing a specialized need of the veteran and located at Highland Drive.

The **Beta Team** treats patients who have mood disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder and suicidal behavior. The Beta Team also provides treatment for veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma.

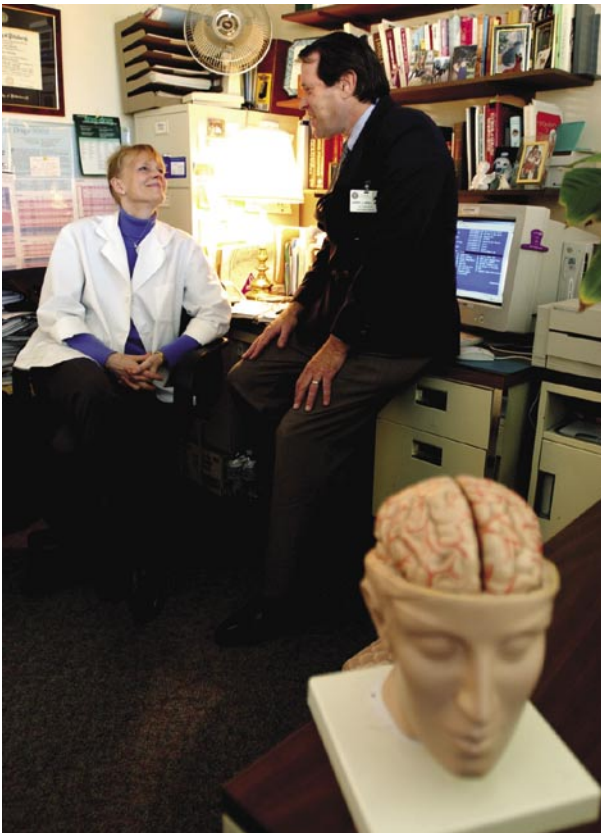
The **Sigma Team** is a primary mental health care team that treats veterans with chronic mental illness, schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder. The Sigma Team also has links with the Community Support Program for Intensive Case Management and with the Center for Treatment of Addictive Disorders.

The **Omega Team** provides help to veterans with anxiety disorders. Some of the specialized programs available through this team include: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team; Ex-POW Regional Center; and Behavioral Medicine Clinic.



The **Behavioral Medicine Clinic** at the Highland Drive Division provides a variety of individual, family and group programs designed to help veterans and their families develop healthier behaviors and coping styles, and lead to healthier, more productive lives. Just a few of the services available include: smoking cessation groups; anger management; pain management; weight control/healthy lifestyle change; headache treatment; coping with chronic illness; cancer support, and relaxation training.

The **Neurobehavioral Program** at the Highland Drive Division treats individuals with cognitive or psychiatric complications of demonstrated or suspected neurological disorders, such as stroke, head injury, brain tumors, epilepsy, and dementias. Treatment is provided from a multidisciplinary team approach representing the disciplines of Neurology, Psychology, Psychiatry, and Medicine. Treatment approaches include: group therapy; individual therapy;



medications; couples therapy; support groups; and patient education.

The **Center for Treatment of Addictive Disorders (CTAD)** provides comprehensive rehabilitation services that encourage veterans to recognize that recovery from an addictive disorder is a long-term process requiring abstinence and behavioral change. At the Highland Drive Division there is a Substance Use/PTSD Team and an Opioid Substitution Therapy

# Services Provide Excellence in Innovative Treatment

Clinic. A Substance Abuse Detection and Early Intervention Center is located at University Drive. Heinz offers Addiction Support Services. Treatment is provided by a multidisciplinary team with specialized training in treatment of addictive disorders and compulsive behaviors. The CTAD also provides a 24-hour program information line (412-365-5177).

The **Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM)** program is a Community Support Program headquartered at Highland Drive that helps veterans with serious mental illnesses adjust to and thrive in community living. The VAPHS program is currently one of only two such programs in VISN 4. As more programs begin, the VAPHS has become a mentor and model. The VAPHS program is one of the five largest MHICM programs in the country.

The program helps the veteran transition to outside



living. This program provides intensive, active help in the veterans' communities. A case manager works closely with the veteran and their family. Ninety percent of participants live at home.

One of the most important functions of the program is to help the veteran decide what they want their life to be and how they will achieve it.

The **Psychiatric Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PR RTP)** was one of 13 original recovery-based programs established in 1992. Currently there are 26 similar programs throughout the country. The VAPHS coordinates 2 PRRT houses in the community, with six veterans, most with a primary diagnosis of substance abuse, occupying each.

Veterans pay a daily program fee to pay for utilities and maintenance since the VAPHS does not provide funds for the house. The program embodies the philosophy of psychosocial rehabilitation and addresses all aspects of the veteran's life. Veterans



work on life skills such as interaction with other people and resolving situations in a civil manner. The occupants are responsible for maintaining the house and are expected to buy and cook their own food. A staff member is at the house every day to help the veterans as needed.

The occupants must have a work assignment through VI/CWT with the VA or a private company to get paid a comparable wage and a minimum of \$100 from each paycheck is required to be put into a savings account. Program participants must also attend a minimum of 3 AA or NA meetings a week plus an After Care meeting and a combined house meeting. Peer counseling is a valuable part of the program.

The **Community Residential Care Program (CRCP)** currently provides room, board, supervision, transportation, activities and personal care to 236 veterans. The CRCP assists individual veterans who do not require hospitalization or nursing home care but who, because of medical or psychosocial conditions, are not able to live independently and do not have suitable family resources to provide the needed care. Placement may be time-limited or of indefinite duration. Through careful selection, placement, treatment planning and follow-up care, efforts are made to re-integrate the veteran into the community, restore their functioning to the highest possible level, and give the veteran an opportunity to assume more responsibility. Care is provided at the veteran's own expense in homes inspected and approved by the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and appropriate state licensing agencies.

The CRC social workers and sponsors provide intervention directed at a wide variety of problems which hamper successful adjustment. The veterans also receive outpatient follow-up by their primary care team and other appropriate professional staff.





March 25, 2003

Re: Beth Kenny. Resident  
Dear Dr. Wargo

In the recent years of medical management for my father, EHM, and myself, my husband and I have had the opportunity of meeting with a number of physicians from various medical facilities, both private and within academic setting.

With few exceptions in twelve years of very intense medical interaction, we have not come across a physician whom possesses the ability to communicate with the elderly with such ease, simplicity, compassion and respect.

The area of hearing, which is such an essential part of not only our physical well being, but also our psychological comprehension, it is of particular importance that this be addressed with increased sensitivity.

In a society where it appears to be increasingly more convenient to simply see to the most basic needs of individuals, Dr. Kenny's empathy and patience is not only greatly appreciated but most reassuring and encouraging.

Sincerely,  
SMB and PJB



# Mail Bag

Ms. Nealon,

Recently the Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program did a Recovery group project that required the residents to plant seeds and relate the seeds' development and growth with their own.

We talked with Reinhardt Lengers, FMS gardener, Grounds Keeping Department, for help with this project. He provided valuable technical assistance to us, getting us potting soil, planters, and information on the best seeds to buy. As a result, several residents have successfully grown plants that reinforce the theme of our recovery program.

The staff and residents of PR RTP would like to recognize his cooperation and helpfulness in providing service to our veterans.

Sincerely,

Lisa Fitzsimmons, MSW, Program Coordinator  
Tom Kirsch, RN, Nurse Manager

April 7, 2003

*To whom it may concern:*

*I would like to recognize the whole entire staff in Aspinwall. The whole entire staff has gone above and beyond the call of duty. They all have wonderful spirit and a kind heart. They took extra time to make sure my mother was very comfortable and understood what was going on. They also made me feel confident that my mother was well cared for. It is rare nowadays to find people who care and have compassion. We are blessed that we have found that. The doctors and the staff have done everything they could to make my mother and I at ease with this unfortunate situation. So, my mother and I would like to take this time to thank you all.*

*With God's blessings,  
AS and KH*

9/15/03

**To whom it may concern:**

**I have just recently received the Sponsor Satisfaction Survey regarding my social worker. In addition to the survey, I just wanted to say a few words about my social worker, Andrea Danko. I have been working with her for the past several years. She has always been available to me in whatever situation I need her. She is only a cell phone call away. If I call her she will return calls even on weekends, which I find amazing and very helpful. I have worked with many other social workers, both good and bad. Andrea is an excellent social worker. She truly cares about the residents of my home! She even attends family functions that I hold on the weekends so she can meet with both the resident and their families. My family members receive this very well.**

**I feel she deserves a "job well done"!**

**Sincerely,  
Linda Mueller, RN, BSN, Owner/Administrator Colonial Gardens**

Spotlight On

New Assistant  
Chief of Police

Mary A.  
Gild



Warren Park

Assistant Chief Gild previously served as the Physical Security Specialist for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Washington D.C. and was also a consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton in Falls Church, VA, a strategy and technology consulting firm.

Assistant Chief Gild is also a veteran and has been with the VAPHS since March of this year. She has an Associates Degree in Law Enforcement Technology from the University of Akron, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Administration from Kent State University, and a Masters of Public Administration from Central Michigan University. She has two adult children.

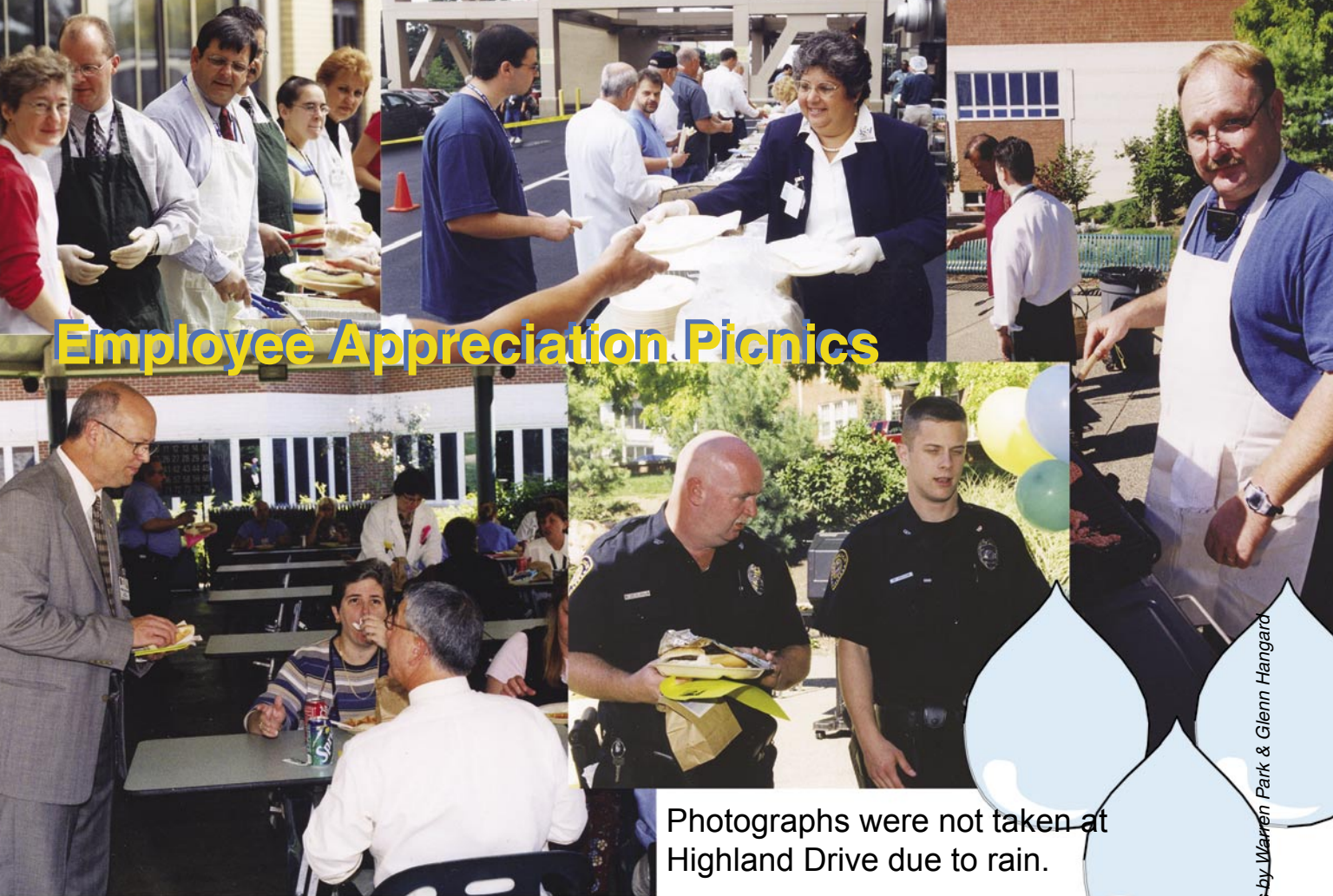
Congratulations

Employees with 20 years or more of service!

The employees listed have reached a benchmark in their years of government service during the period  
**April 1, - September 30, 2003.**

Name	Service Line	Years
Joanne L. Faas	Facilities Management	40
Randolph A. Schultz	Clinical Support	40
Dennis P. Fela	Facilities Management	35
Thomas Gaughan	Police Service	35
Robert A. Huchel	Facilities Management	35
Elizabeth A. Brown	Information Resources Mgmt.	30
Suzanne C. Durandetto	Community Based Care	30
John M. Gazda	Clinical Support	30
Genevieve Graff	Business Services	30
Margaret Engwer	Facilities Management	30
Richard J. Malsch	Facilities Management	30
Joseph T. McCullough	Business Services	30
Robert H. Shafer	Facilities Management	30
Dorothy L. Steele	VISN	30
Wayne J. Tropea	Clinical Support	30
Martha A. Watkins	Patient Care Services	30
Deborah S. Anderson	Business Services	25
John A. Brewer	Facilities Management	25
Larry L. Bunch	Business Service	25
Carol A. Carilli	Patient Care Services	25
Richard Chojnicki	Business Services	25
Ann M. Detar	Surgical Specialty	25
Neala L. Ferrero	Behavioral Health	25
Zenora Henderson	Nutrition and Food	25
George E. Martin	Business Services	25
Judith Molnar	Patient Care Services	25
Ruth R. Morsillo	Office of the Director	25
Teresa M. Padol	Patient Care Services	25
Linda L. Payne	Business Services	25
Connie A. Pinchak	Community Based Care	25
Cheryl A. Weidner	Business Services	25
E. Phillip Williams	Patient Care Services	25
Robert J. Bernotas	Facilities Management	20
Patricia L. Bookser	Business Services	20
Debbie A. Buzzard	Medical Specialty	20
James A. Duffy	Nutrition and Food	20
Michael L. Klugh	Behavioral Health	20
Marie E. Krugle	Surgical Specialty	20
Susan A. Malarkey	Business Services	20
Kathleen M. Ross	Surgical Specialty	20
Sandra L. Rudert	Behavioral Health	20
Eta Shtrahman	Primary Care	20
Keith H. Watson	Facilities Management	20
Susan A. Williams	Office of the Director	20



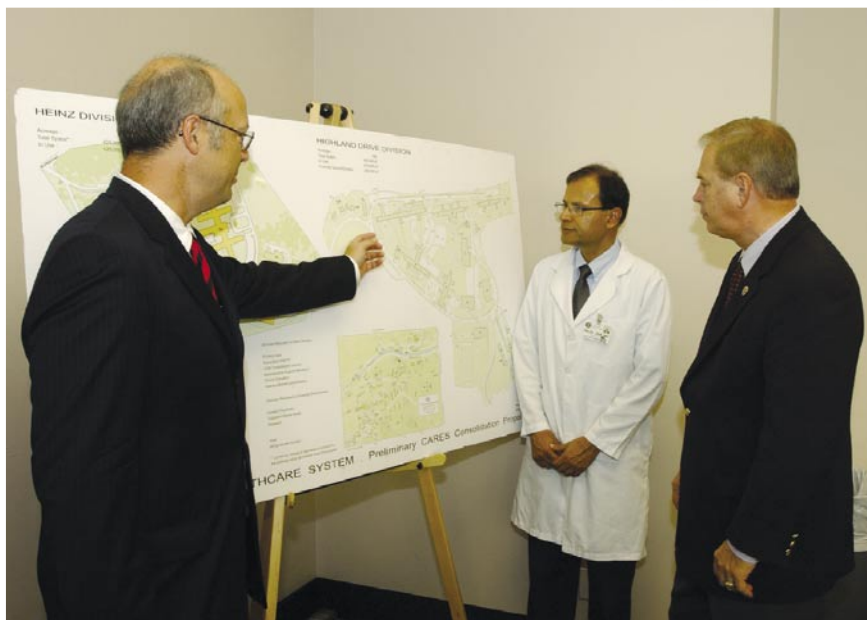


## Employee Appreciation Picnics

Photographs were not taken at Highland Drive due to rain.

Photos by Warren Park & Glenn Hangard

## Visit by Congressman Ted Stickland



Photos by Warren Park

VAPHS Director, Michael Moreland, and Chief of Staff, Dr. Rajiv Jain, give a briefing on the Pittsburgh CARES proposal to US Congressman Ted Strickland, of Ohio. Congressman Strickland toured all three divisions of VAPHS in August.

### Mission

The mission of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is to care for America's veterans; providing excellent health care, training their future providers, and advancing medical knowledge through research.

### Vision

Our shared vision is to strive for excellence in everything we do, working together to exceed the expectations of our veterans.